

Sharing Your Concerns

Thank you for your calls. These have been very helpful to us in understanding the concerns residents have about living in FEMA trailers.

We will be sending teams out to visit with residents. You can also call 1-800-CDC-INFO to give us your thoughts. This is a free telephone call.

We will use your concerns in a general way to inform our work. Once again, if you have health problems now, please see a doctor or another medical professional if you can.

For More Information

We appreciate all that you do to stay healthy. CDC staff will be providing more information to you as we learn more. We will share the results of our health study as soon as they are available.

In the meantime, if you would like more information about indoor air quality and health, we will try to answer your questions. Please feel free to:

Call us at
1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)

Visit our Web site:
<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/substances/formaldehyde/trailers.html>

If you have questions related to moving out of your temporary housing, here is the FEMA number for those questions:
1-866-562-2381



Indoor Air Quality and Health in FEMA Trailers

Overview

Background

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is responding to concerns about formaldehyde levels and air quality in FEMA trailers. This fact sheet will give you steps you can take to keep your indoor air as safe as possible while you are waiting to move to a new home or repairing your house.

CDC also expects to do a health study in a sample of the trailers. This will give us more information about the formaldehyde and other chemicals and how these may have affected people’s health. We will share what we learn with you as soon as possible.

About CDC

CDC is a federal public health agency based in Atlanta, GA. Our mission is to promote health and quality of life by preventing and controlling disease, injury, and disability. CDC’s environmental health experts will lead the response to concerns about formaldehyde levels and air quality in FEMA trailers.

We would like for you to know that we understand from calls to our hotline (1-800-CDC-INFO) that you may be still facing many hardships as a result of the Katrina and Rita disasters. We want to express our sincere respect for the challenges you face if you have lost your home and still do not have a new one.

Indoor Air Quality and Your Health

Introduction

While CDC is looking into concerns about formaldehyde, we want you to know that formaldehyde is one of many things that can make indoor air unhealthy. This fact sheet will give you more information about who is at risk for health problems from poor indoor air quality -- and what you can do to protect your health.



Who Is At Most Risk

Everyone needs to have clean air to breathe. However, some people are more at risk for health problems from poor indoor air quality. These include:

- Children
- Elderly people
- People who have asthma
- People who have chronic lung disease such as bronchitis and emphysema
- People with existing heart disease

Symptoms

Many people have asked us: what are the symptoms of breathing formaldehyde? These are the same as breathing other pollutants found in indoor air, such as mold or cigarette smoke. Symptoms include:

- nose and eye irritation (burning, itching, tearing, and sore throat)
- asthma-like symptoms (chest tightness, coughing, and shortness of breath)

If you have these symptoms, we recommend that you see a doctor or another medical professional if you can.

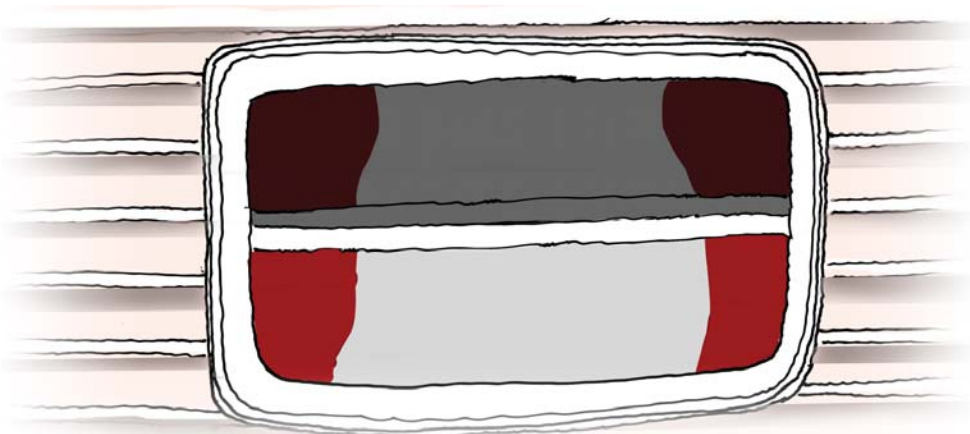
What You Can Do

Here are the steps you can take to keep the air in your temporary home as safe as possible. The first step also helps to reduce any levels of formaldehyde in your indoor air.

Bring in outside air

You can't always bring in outside air, but as much as possible:

- Open windows to allow air to flow into your trailer.
- Use fans to bring fresh air inside.
- Be sure to bring in air when you use cleaning products or insecticides!

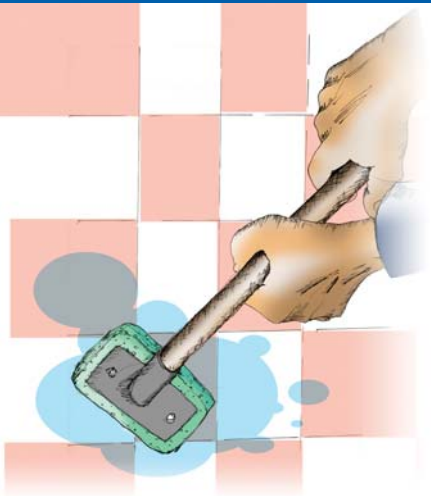


Open windows when you can.

What You Can Do (cont.)

Reduce indoor air pollution

- Try not to smoke inside your home. Smoke builds up fast in a small space.
- Clean floors often, especially if you have pets.



Fight mold

- Clean away any mold you see.
- If mold has formed in your trailer, you can clean it using a bleach solution.
 - Use 1 cup of bleach to 1 gallon of water. Remember never mix bleach with ammonia.
- Get rid of the source of mold if you can.
 - Do you see any source of the water in the trailer? There may be a leak in your roof or from a pipe. Fix the leak so mold won't have the moisture it needs to grow.



Next Steps

To learn more about air quality and health in FEMA trailers, CDC is taking several steps, including the health study mentioned earlier. CDC staff will:

- Test the air in randomly-selected trailers for indoor air pollutants, including formaldehyde. We will test both unoccupied and occupied trailers.
- Work with parents to study children ages 2-12 to see if there has been any health effect on their breathing from living in trailers.

Note: We will not be able to test every child living in a FEMA trailer. Our goal is conduct our study as quickly as possible so that we can provide answers to questions we have received. We expect to release our results in Summer 2008.